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THE RETIRED OFFICER
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Russ Propag Ma

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ON THE SIXTEENTH of March, 1978, Aldo Moro, the President of Italy's ruling Christian Democratic Party and a former Premier, was snatched from his automobile on a busy Roman street by desperadoes who gunned down his five bodyguards and carried him off into hiding. The kidnappers were quickly identified as members of the notorious Red Brigades.

The Italian government spurned offers to release the famous man in return for 13 terrorists who were then on trial. On May 9, Moro's body with 13 bullet holes in it was left in a car parked near his party's headquarters.

There had been hundreds of recent personal attacks attributed to the Red Brigades, an international band of extortionists believed to have Communist connections through the Soviet secret police, the KGB. This time, the eminence of the victim and daylight boldness of the crime focused worldwide attention and brought on a political crisis in Italy. After hastily passing Draconian anti-terrorism legislation, the government fell.

The Kremlin's farsighted propaganda apparatus, however, was in no disarray. For openers, on March 16, the very day of the kidnapping, Radio Moscow in a worldwide broadcast in English called it a "crime of reaction" and just another "attempt by a right-wing force to aggravate the situation in Italy." In an Italian language broadcast on March 18, Moscow quoted the French Communist Party newspaper, *L'Humanite*, as reporting that, "Secret Services whose activity is connected with the NATO military base in Naples," were involved.

SOVIETS ACCUSE THE CIA

After hinting that the CIA must be involved because the operation was too complex for local talent (teaching the Red Brigades the art of kidnapping would be something like teaching the Swiss how to make watches), the Soviets got to the point. Moscow Radio's commentator, Anatoly Ovsyannikov, stated, "Well, to call a spade a spade, that service (masterminding the

foreign power that it belongs to is United States of America."

This charge was, of course, considered ridiculous by America since the U.S. looked favorably on Moro's effort to provide Italy with a stable, fair centrist government. But Moscow's immediate target now was NATO and Italy. And they had another shoe to drop.

Back in 1975, a communist agent had secured a copy of U.S. Army Field Manual FM 30-31A, a routine classification document which, like other such manuals, bore the signature of the Army Chief of Staff, Gen William Westmoreland. With this authentic manual in hand, complete with Westmoreland's well-known signature, it remained only to rewrite the contents, duplicate the typeface and label it FM 30-31B.

The text of the fake document surfaced first in a small, left-wing Turkish newspaper in March 1975. In September 1976, a photocopy of FM 30-31B was tacked up on the bulletin board of the Philippine Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand, by a "concerned citizen." It reappeared again in 1978 when, with some unassuming help from a Cuban intelligence officer, it was made available to two Spanish newspapers. At this point patience and a well-covered trail paid off. The spurious manual together with articles concerning it appeared in newspapers in more than 20 countries including Italy and the United States.

The forged contents of this far-traveling pamphlet provided purported guidance to U.S. Army intelligence officers for the subversion of host country officials. Specifically, it

forgers in the Kremlin to support the charge that the CIA was an agent provocateur in the murder of Moro. They merely used one lie to lend credence to another.

The U.S. State Department received some disturbed inquiries from friendly governments about FM 30-31B. The forgers, thinking perhaps to enhance its attention value, had classified it as *Top Secret*. It was, then, only necessary for the U.S. to point out that no American Army Field Manual was ever given that high a classification.

But the truth never quite catches up to an interesting lie.

"DEZINFORMATSIYA"

This bit of history is retold as an excellent and not unusual example of the Soviet Union's unique disinformation program. The Russian word for it is "dezinformatsiya," and the "dreaded Cheka"—the first Soviet state security apparatus, and all of its several descendants down to the current KGB—have had a Disinformation Desk. In 1959 the KGB established a full-fledged Disinformation Department known as De-

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